

## **Web Site Accessibility Policy and Transition Plan for the State of South Carolina**

### **I. Policy**

The State of South Carolina is committed to providing accessibility to state government Internet-based resources.

South Carolina state government Web sites shall be designed to be accessible, so that people with disabilities have access to online information, data, and services comparable to that accorded individuals who do not have disabilities.

### **II. Guidelines**

Following the Guidelines (described in Parts A and B below) and the Transition Plan (outlined in Part III) will assist a state agency in ensuring that its Web presence is accessible to the widest possible range of users.

Implementation of the Minimal Requirements in Part A satisfies basic accessibility requirements for state government Web pages. In addition, agencies are encouraged to go beyond the minimum in making Web pages accessible by following the Best Practices in Part B.

#### **A. Minimal Requirements**

The State of South Carolina shall follow the standards established under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, amended 1998 by the Work Force Investment Act (Section 1194.22 and its subsequent amendments), as its minimal requirements for Web accessibility. [See Appendix 1.]

#### **B. Best Practices**

It is recommended that agencies also follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines established by the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative (W3C-WAI) that are not addressed in Section 508. [See Appendix 2.]

### III. Transition Plan

#### A. Self-Assessment

Each agency shall review the current status of accessibility for its Web presence.

This review does not require an agency to evaluate each page of a site, but instead requires the agency to appraise the overall accessibility of its Web presence.

As a starting point, it is suggested that each agency evaluate the accessibility of the most frequently visited pages and a random sampling of other pages.

#### B. Plan

Each agency shall develop, keep on file, and implement a written plan for making its Internet Web presence accessible as well as a plan for making its Intranet Web presence accessible. The planning documents shall include provisions for necessary staff training.

Each agency head shall appoint an individual with sufficient authority and resources to be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the agency's plans.

#### C. Deadline

The deadline for achieving accessibility on Internet sites, as outlined in Section D, shall be no later than two years from the passage of the policy by the Architecture Oversight Committee (AOC) plus a review period of 21 days from the posting of this policy on the AOC Web site. (The deadline for Internet site compliance is July 21, 2006.)

The deadline for achieving Intranet site accessibility, as outlined in Section D, shall be no later than 2 years after the Internet site deadline. (The deadline for compliance is July 21, 2008.)

#### D. Order of Implementation

Each agency shall implement Web site accessibility in the following order:

1. Main entry pages, home pages, top-level pages, most frequently visited pages, and pages that provide mission-critical agency services.
2. Front-end user interfaces that provide access to agency applications.
3. All new pages and interfaces created after the deadline.
4. Legacy pages and interfaces updated after the deadline.

#### E. Exceptions

It is not required that all pages be retrofitted.

Expressly excluded are:

1. Legacy pages that do not require content updates.
2. Legacy front-end user interfaces that do not require content updates.
3. Instances in which undue burden can be proven.

However, if an individual with a disability requests specific information published in an inaccessible section of a Web site, each agency shall, within a reasonable length of time, provide the requested information or data in a format accessible to that individual or by an alternative means of access that allows the individual to use the information and data.

#### F. Feedback Mechanism

Each agency shall establish a mechanism for collecting and responding within a reasonable length of time to comments, complaints, and suggestions about accessibility of its Web presence.

#### G. Resources

Recognizing that agencies may need assistance in carrying out this policy and plan, the South Carolina Web Accessibility Workgroup of the Assistive Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC) shall create an official State of South Carolina Accessibility Web site to provide a list of resources and training opportunities, and recommended topics for training.

#### IV. Definitions

##### A. Access Board

The Access Board is an independent Federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities. Under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments, the Access Board published standards for electronic and information technology, including Web access.

##### B. Architecture Oversight Committee (AOC)

The charge of the Architecture Oversight Committee (AOC) is to advise the State Budget and Control Board's Division of the State Chief Information Officer on how the State might best use technology to become a recognized leader in delivering cost effective services desired by citizens, businesses, and government organizations, while maximizing constituent participation in the governmental process.

##### C. Assistive Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC)

The role of the South Carolina Assistive Technology Advisory Committee is to assist State government in meeting its obligation to provide access to government information for all South Carolinians.

##### D. Agency

See "State Agency."

##### E. Disability

The term "disability" with respect to an individual as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) means:

1. A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual. Major life activities include: seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, caring for oneself, and working;
2. A record of such an impairment; or
3. Being regarded as having such an impairment.

If an individual meets any one of these three tests, he or she is considered to be an individual with a disability.

#### F. Legacy Pages

Web pages created prior to the effective date of this policy.

#### G. State Agency

Each department, office, board, bureau, commission, and other unit of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of state government, including public four- and two-year colleges and universities.

#### H. Undue Burden

Undue burden means significant difficulty or expense. In determining whether an action would result in an undue burden, an agency shall consider all agency resources available to the agency or components for which the product is being developed, procured, maintained, or used.

#### I. Web Presence

While Web presence is often used as a synonym for the term Web site, Web presence further expresses the idea of a virtual presentation in "cyberspace."

Web presence includes anything associated with an agency's official Web site(s), whether reached through the Internet or an intranet, extranet, or courseware.

#### J. Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)

The WAI, in coordination with organizations around the world, pursues accessibility of the Web through five primary areas of work: technology, guidelines, tools, education and outreach, and research and development. This initiative is a subset of W3C.

#### K. World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)

The W3C is an international industry consortium of approximately 500 organizations. W3C was created to establish Web standards and lead the Web to its full potential by developing common protocols that promote its evolution and ensure its interoperability.

## Appendix 1 – Section 508 Standards for Web Accessibility

[Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, amended 1998 by the Work Force Investment Act](#) sets standards for hardware, software, and Web accessibility. The Section 508 Web accessibility standards are listed below.

§ 1194.22 Web-based intranet and internet information and applications.

- (a) A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content).
- (b) Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation.
- (c) Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.
- (d) Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.
- (e) Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.
- (f) Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.
- (g) Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.
- (h) Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.
- (i) Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.
- (j) Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.
- (k) A text-only page, with equivalent information or functionality, shall be provided to make a web site comply with the provisions of this part, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes.
- (l) When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.
- (m) When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with §1194.21(a) through (l).
- (n) When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.
- (o) A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.
- (p) When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.

Note to §1194.22: 1. The Board interprets paragraphs (a) through (k) of this section as consistent with the following priority 1 Checkpoints of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 (WCAG 1.0) (May 5, 1999) published by the Web Accessibility Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium:

Section 1194.22 Paragraph	WCAG 1.0 Checkpoint
(a)	1.1
(b)	1.4
(c)	2.1
(d)	6.1
(e)	1.2
(f)	9.1
(g)	5.1
(h)	5.2
(i)	12.1
(j)	7.1
(k)	11.4

2. Paragraphs (l), (m), (n), (o), and (p) of this section are different from WCAG 1.0. Web pages that conform to WCAG 1.0, level A (i.e., all priority 1 checkpoints) must also meet paragraphs (l), (m), (n), (o), and (p) of this section to comply with this section. WCAG 1.0 is available at <http://www.w3.org/TR/1999/WAI-WEBCONTENT-19990505>.

## Appendix 2 – W3C-WAI Web Accessibility Guidelines

The [World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative](#) (W3C-WAI) developed guidelines for Web accessibility. The current guidelines are the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0](#).

A new [Working Draft of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0](#) has been developed and is under [review](#).